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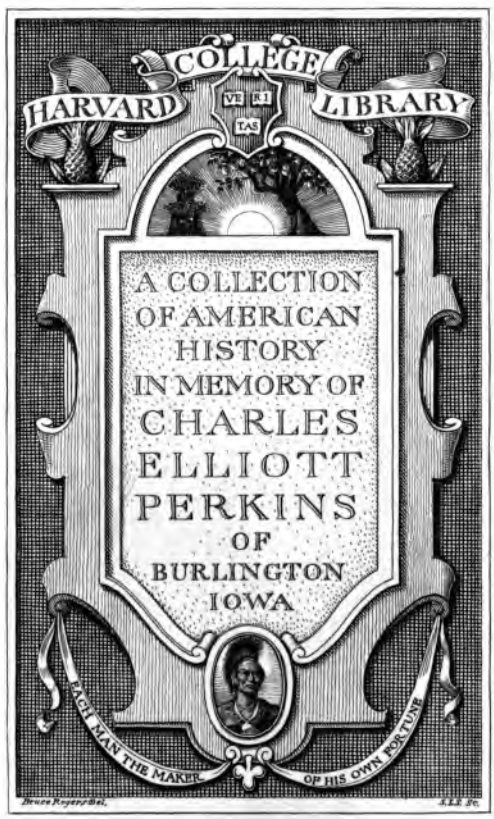
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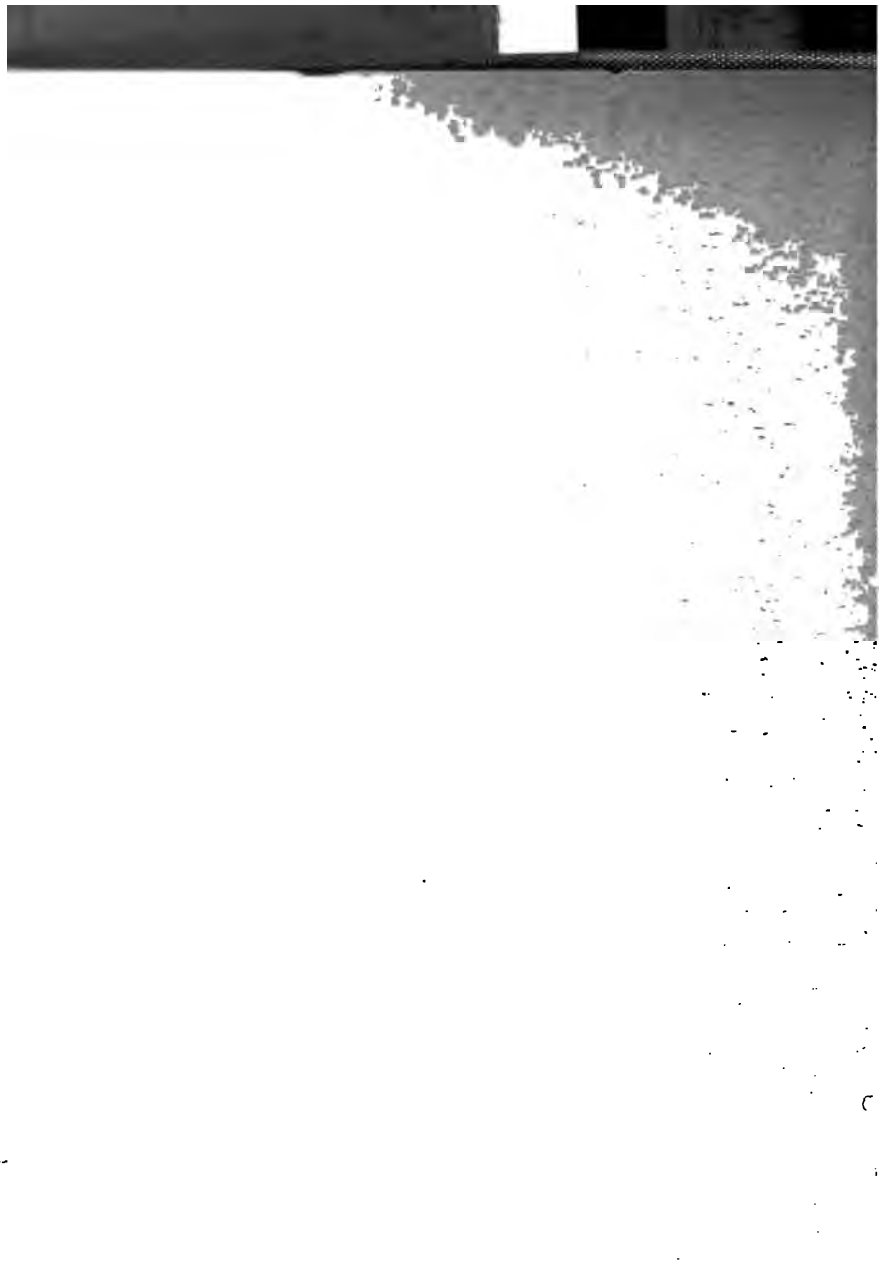

THE MORMON INIQUITY.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED

BEFORE THE

NEW WEST EDUCATION COMMISSION,

IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 2, 1884,

BY

REV. F. A. NOBLE, D. D.,

Of the Union Park Congregational Church, Chicago, Ill.

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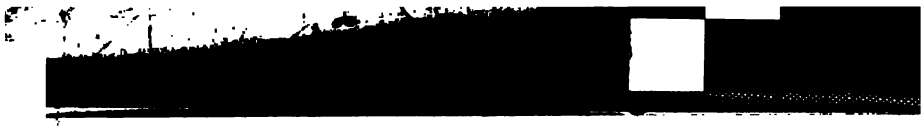

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THE MORMON INIQUITY.

"Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain."—JOEL ii:1

It is not because I chance to be identified with the "*New West Education Commission,*" though this fact brings me into more immediate contact with some phases of the problem, and helps to deepen my sense of the gravity of the situation ; but it is primarily because I am an American Citizen, grateful for the magnificent inheritance we have received from our fathers, and alive to the responsibilities we are under to preserve and perpetuate our free institutions unimpaired, that I feel so profoundly moved by what is at once the folly and the shame and the defiant iniquity of Mormonism.

We have many evils in this land, and we are exposed to many perils. It is impossible for good men to be too vigilant and earnest in guarding against the encroachments of harm. But yonder, amongst the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, casting its roots into the fertile valleys, finding nourishment and strength in the crevices of the everlasting hills, there grows an evil, peculiar, enormous, and prophetic of untold disaster, before which thoughtful men may well pause and ponder. Mormonism in the West, illiteracy in the South, rum in the East and everywhere—these are the elements of the Devil's Trinity. These are the forms and forces of evil we must fight, and conquer, if individuals are to be kept from plunging down into vice and crime, if homes are to be preserved sweet and happy, if the currents of prosperity are to flow on with an increasing volume, and if we are to maintain before God and the nations of the earth the high place which our history and our opportunities and our measureless resources and our high era in civilization would seem to demand.

Singularly enough, this Mormon evil, standing out by itself, individual, compact, approachable, and not interwoven with all the traditions and habits and interests of the people at large, but yet taking on new and startling proportions every year, is the evil against which we are making the least practical protest. True, there has been some advance since the time when there was a party in power and a chief executive of the nation who could so far out-

to recall a few facts in the history of Mormonism. Not many, I am persuaded, are fully aware of the marvelous growth and present push of this system. There is reason for this. Ordinarily it would hardly seem possible for a community of this sort to advance to such numbers and power from such a source in so short a time. For it is not a matter of conjecture or prejudice—it is an open secret—known to everybody who takes any pains to investigate the facts, that Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was not only a fanatic but a rascal. There are persons with whom I have recently talked who had early knowledge of Smith and his family, and who are well informed of all his operations at Palmyra, N. Y., where he and they were children together, though Smith was born at Sharon, Vt., and where this bad business was set in motion. All these unhesitatingly confirm the story of his unsavory reputation. He was a low, ignorant character, fond of dreams and full of schemes from the first.

In 1829, at the place just named, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery baptized each other. That was the visible beginning of a movement which was to be phenomenal in its development. In 1830 these two men brought out the "Book of Mormon," and at once put forth the claim that it was divinely inspired. They went further and said this book was not only as much the word of God as the Bible, but that it was a necessary supplement to the Bible. Mormons still maintain that view. Only a little later Smith suddenly left Palmyra to avoid his creditors. His followers also left. These, from the outset, included his father and two brothers. It was one of Joseph Smith's brothers who found and converted Brigham Young. When Brigham Young joined the organization he brought with him four brothers and six sisters. Smith and the Youngs were all native New Englanders, all Vermonters!

The next local habitation of Mormonism was Kirtland, Ohio. The Mormons still have adherents and a foothold in that town. It was while at Kirtland that the significant accession of Brigham Young and his brothers and sisters, just referred to, took place. Here, indeed, the growth was rapid. The numbers were soon carried up to a thousand. The press was called into requisition and a magazine was started. But the character of Smith did not improve. When he had not been in the town more than a year at the longest, he was subjected to a bit of lynch punishment by the indignant citizens for forgery and for other dishonorable dealings.

Neither indignation nor punishment was enough to quench his audacity. He soon started a bank in Kirtland, with nothing to start it on. He failed, of course, and fled. Venturing to return, he was arrested for swindling, but somehow managed, as such men too often do, to escape from the clutches of the sheriff.

Very naturally about this time Smith received a revelation that Kirtland was not a good place for him and his followers, but that their awaiting Eden would be found at Independence, Missouri. Thither the saints hurried and drove down the stakes for a new home. They grew rapidly. Increasing in numbers and wealth, they increased also in arrogance. The claims they put forth were startling—not more startling than the claims they put forth now ought to be; but they were new then. They were going to possess the whole land, and with bloody wars, if need be, exterminate all other sects. Under the counsel of their leaders they set up a government of their own, and undertook to carry it on, independent of the State. To the credit of Missouri, this incipient imperialism was nipped in the bud, and that State was left with only the curse of slavery to manage and overcome.

Meeting with this decided opposition the Mormons, in 1840, recrossed the Mississippi, and established the town of Nauvoo, in Illinois. For a while everything was propitious. The neighbors of the Mormons treated them kindly. It was a golden opportunity, and they made the most of it. All the known proselyting agencies were put in active and successful operation. Missionaries were abroad, as they have been ever since. Tracts and periodicals were freely distributed. Mormon churches were organized in England, Scotland and Wales. Ship-loads of adherents were sent over from Liverpool by Brigham Young. The leaders claimed at that time a following of not less than a hundred thousand souls. The number at Nauvoo was large and steadily multiplying. Up to this period in the career of the Mormons no stress had been laid on plural marriages. But this was not long in coming.

In 1843 Smith received a revelation authorizing polygamy. This revelation precipitated a crisis. A conflict ensued. Smith lost his life at the hands of a mob. There was another movement of the body. Nauvoo was abandoned. The Mississippi was crossed again. With a worldly wisdom that was far-sighted, and with a courage and fortitude which were admirable, this community set their faces toward the mountains, and they paused not till they

had traversed the long, perilous journey of fifteen hundred miles, and pitched their tents in the most fertile and inviting section of all Utah.

In 1852 polygamy, against which there had been some protesting when it was announced as being according to the will of God, nine years before, was incorporated into the Mormon system, to be henceforth one of its conspicuous and vital parts. In this way was the edifice, whose foundation Smith had laid in lying pretensions and fanaticism and unexampled arrogance, capped and completed.

A strange story—is it not? Ignorance, conceit, assumption, audacity, dishonesty, skill in playing on the passions and superstitions of men, coupled with much real self-denial and an unflagging persistence, and an unfaltering determination to carry the point in hand, crowned with this present success!

Is it not easy to see what trickery, what cunning duplicity, what an absolute overriding of moral distinctions and obligations there has been in the movement from the first? Is it not easy to see how Mormonism has gone forward because these elements were in it to give it impulse? Yet there are intelligent men, some of them claiming to be Christian men, some of them editors of newspapers, some of them occupying seats in the halls of legislation, who affirm that these people, inasmuch as they claim to have books which are inspired revelations from God, are just as much entitled to consideration in that claim as those who believe in the New Testament. Whereas the whole thing has been palmed off upon them, and upon the world, by one of the most graceless scamps of our modern times. It is a direct insult to intelligence; it is a shock to the moral sense which has any wholesome vigor or responsiveness in it, to allow for a moment that there is any ground for the plea of toleration in the assumption of Joseph Smith that God authorized through him the anomalous and monstrous scheme of Mormon polygamy. It is amazing that men, otherwise clear-headed and intelligent, permit themselves to be caught with this kind of sophistry. At the outset the whole business was a fraud, and the revelations which this man pretended to receive from God, instead of justifying our respect, and closing our mouths of opposition, ought to arouse our hottest indignation, and kindle us into a zeal which shall know no pause till the rubbish of this miserable charlatanism has been swept away and consumed.

Meantime there is Mormonism—just where it planted itself forty

years ago and more—with not one of its pretensions abated, alive at all points, aggressive, defiant, and stronger at this hour, not only in numbers and resources and experience, but in a subtle influence which it exerts over trade and capital and politics, than at any former period of its existence. Mormonism shuts mouths in Chicago and New York, because Mormon traders buy goods in Chicago and New York. Mormonism puts an embargo of silence on capital in State street and Wall street, because Mormon business pays tribute to the investments of Eastern money. We talk about it; we pass our resolutions against Mormon practices; but the Mormons go on, with a cunning and an industry and a steadiness of purpose which, in any good cause, would be worthy of all commendation, building up their threatening and vicious system.

We have been saying all along: "Light will fall in on them by-and-by, and under the illumination of an increasing intelligence they will either yield their claims and reform their conduct, or retreat away into further darkness." No light has yet been shed on them sufficient to change their purposes as voiced by their leaders. We said: "Surely railroads will destroy them." These men have the shrewdness to use railroads, and nothing has helped them so much. They can transport a company of converts from Liverpool to Salt Lake City now, by the aid of steam, at small expense, in the briefest possible time, and with hardly a break. We said: "The click of the telegraph will fill them with dismay." The telegraph was just what the head men wanted, to give them instant information of what was going on in all the remotest bounds of their jurisdiction, and to bring the circumference into quick subordination to the centre. We said: "When distinguished visitors begin to look in on them, and ministers and moralists and statesmen begin to touch them, and uncover their life, they will be shamed out of their immorality." The authorities of the Mormon Church pay special attention to distinguished visitors. If the visitors happen to be men who have a high appreciation of industry and thrift and fine generalship, quite likely they take them captive, and send them off, just as men who were easily moved by appearances used to be sent off from the abundant hospitality of the old slave-owners of the South, with the ready phrases in their mouths that after all there were two sides to the story. It is the policy of these Mormons to capture every man they can. For years we have been passing laws—mere milk-and-water

statutes—which in the execution have proved to be even less effective than the proverbial tufts of grass thrown at the defiant lad in the tree. Just now it looks as though we were beginning to get a grip on them, and that the Edmunds bill, under the fearless and vigorous administration of the Judge whom Illinois has just contributed to the Territory, is likely to prove something more than a mere farce. Polygamists have already been convicted. It is to be devoutly hoped there are "more to follow."

But what an ominous start Mormonism has! What activity and forethought it displays! What a front it presents to the world!

Professor Marden, of Colorado College, is authority for the following statements: "To-day the Mormon Church has as many missionaries as the American Board." As a matter of fact it has more! "In 1881 they sent out 189, besides 79 to Arizona to spy out and secure the best land for purposes of colonization. On a single day, within a recent period, 61 Mormon missionaries sailed for Europe. On another day of the same year 30 more left Salt Lake City in a Pullman car. Within eight months of the same year 3,000 Mormon proselytes arrived at New York!"

"The Mormons have missions in England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Malta, Gibraltar, Hindoostan, Australia, Siam, Ceylon, China, Chili, Guinea, the West Indies, the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand, Iceland, on the banks of the Nile, and even in the Holy Land. Twenty-seven nationalities were represented in one of their recent public celebrations. More converts were sent to Utah in the two seasons which followed the passage of the Edmunds bill than in any four years previous. The Carolinas, Georgia and Tennessee yielded many. The Book of Mormon is printed in many tongues, and periodicals are issued in at least eight languages. Shrewdly, systematically, large areas have been secured in the great central plateau of this continent. They are to be colonized for religious and political control. This colonization is now going on. Some of the best portions of Arizona, Wyoming, New Mexico, Idaho and Colorado are under Mormon domination!"

How does all this look? Does it not look as though it is time for us to break away from the spell of the old lullaby our evil genius has been singing to us for the last fifty years, "Time will mend all!"

But we are not through yet. Following Professor Marden, we learn that "all the Protestant Evangelical Church members in

Wyoming do not equal in numbers one-sixth part of the Mormon Church members of that Territory. Arizona has thirty times as many Mormons as Protestant Evangelical Church members. In Colorado only one denomination, the Methodist, exceeds the Mormon." Statements of a late date are to the effect that there are 2,000 Mormon voters in the State of Colorado. These 2,000 voters come alarmingly near to holding the balance of power on all vital questions. Mormonism, like the South, knows how to vote "solid," and to put its votes "where they will do the most good." The latest word of all is that a large colony of Mormons have just entered Colorado, and spread themselves out over San Luis Park and the adjacent regions.

"In Idaho the leading evangelical denomination is the Presbyterian; but for every Presbyterian in that Territory there are fifteen Mormon Church members. The Congregationalists have two churches in Arizona; the Mormons have thirty-five. In Colorado once more the Congregationalists have twenty-four churches; the Mormons thirty-three. In Wyoming the proportion is one to eight; while in Idaho there is one Congregational church over against forty-two Mormon churches. The Mormon high priests outnumber the Congregational ministers in the United States. In the list of forty-four denominations named in the census only seventeen exceed the Mormons in numbers. Measured by priests or ministers only four denominations in the country exceed the Mormons."

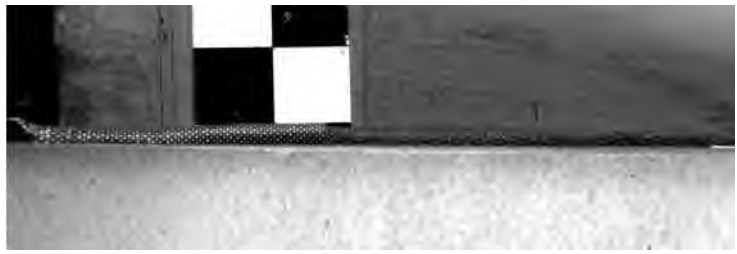
Examined in this way, and with these facts spread out before us, is there not pertinency in asking once more how the business looks? Is there not abundant justification, too, for the statements recently made by a correspondent of the Chicago *Journal* and for the prompitude he urges in dealing with the question? Speaking of the extension of Mormon adherents and Mormon influence into the surrounding regions, he says: "So far as the mere seat of Mormon power is concerned, that can readily be removed from Utah, if necessary, to one of the other Territories. Mormonism cannot be killed by legislation for Utah alone. The evil must be struck at, root and branch, and thoroughly eradicated before it is too late, and its bad influence not permitted to taint future generations. The attention of the Senators and Representatives at Washington should be immediately called to this matter and action taken; for every moment is vital. Every hour this treasonable church grows stronger. Every hour it menaces more and more the life, liberty

sands and thousands of applauding and loyal followers. In the last quarter of this nineteenth century, face to face with all our churches, and schools, and newspapers, under the shelter of a flag and in defiance of the laws of a nation which would brook an insult from no other nation on the earth, that is the kind of talk which is having practical illustration every day. That is the position of a body of men whose original leaders sprung from the loins of New York and New England, and who have to clamber over Plymouth Rock to reach their destination.

Still the old refrain falls in on the ear, "Time will mend it." Left to time to mend, the final mending of this Mormon iniquity will not be with the spelling-book and the New Testament, and the timid, half-hearted legislative enactments of cautious politicians; it will be with the drawn sword and the garments of the nation rolled in blood. Leave Mormon polygamy an unchecked vice, and Mormonism will grow until Mormon Territories become Mormon States, and the whole miserable system is entrenched within the domain of the prerogatives which the National Government accords to the separate Commonwealths of the Republic. Then there will be no adequate remedy but the rupture and wrestle of war. Forty years ago an army officer wrote these words: "There is developing in the Rocky Mountains region a power that will, if unhindered, some day shake this country to its center." Governor Murray, the clear-sighted and efficient head of the civil power of Utah, and a man to be eminently approved "for the enemies he has made," has repeatedly warned "the country of dangers that beset the Government in this irrepressible conflict."

What makes the growth and defiance of polygamy here the more humiliating is that while it is advancing so rapidly and with such boldness in America it is actually receding into the back-ground in Turkey. As we are becoming familiar with it, and through our familiarity are learning not to be too much offended by its claims, the old Empire of the Sultan is becoming ashamed of it. We are not only adopting a mischievous Orientalism, but we are adopting it at the very time when the Orient is discarding it.

Edmondo de Amicis, an Italian author, has written a book under the title of "*Constantinople.*" It has passed through at least seven Italian editions, and is now in the fourth edition of its American translation. He deals with this question of polygamy as he finds it illustrated at the capital of the Turkish Empire. These are some



shows the method. The method is worked skillfully and energetically. Outside the Romish Church there is nothing more complete.

Reference has already been made to the wonderful missionary zeal of these people. A late issue of *The Congregationalist* contains this further information. "The Mormon Church," from its "adult membership in and about Utah of about 90,000, drafts and sends forth annually not far from two hundred elders, who go entirely at their own charges, and remain abroad, on an average, two years. For the most part these are superintendents of mission work, and are re-enforced by not less than 1,500 native elders, who toil each in his own region. Probably 2,000 is not an overestimate for the number continually employed. Since last January 180 elders have gone on missions, and their fields are as follows: To Great Britain, 47 were sent; to Scandinavian lands, 35; to the Northern States, 38; to the Southern States, 18; to New Zealand, 13; to the Sandwich Islands, 9; to the Swiss and German Mission, 9; to Hindoostan, 3, and to Mexico 2."

A Superintendent who has a large number of Christian workers under his direction has just made this statement over his own signature: "One of my missionaries, Mr. ——, of ——, Minnesota, writes me that Mormon missionaries are laboring in that State with success. One family—parents and six children—have gone over to that abomination, plurality of wives and all. He says *there are twenty-two Mormon missionaries in Minnesota at work.*" In Minnesota, bear in mind. There are Mormon missionaries also at work in Dakota. They prey upon the poor and ignorant wherever they find them.

These statements and figures make their own comments. They carry an unmistakable significance on the face of them. Put the pluck, the foresight, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the general subordination of all individual will and interest to the one supreme purpose of gaining an end, which this Mormon Hierarchy exhibits, into anything and it would grow. What encouraging strides Christianity would make in this land, and in all lands, with such plan and energy and self-sacrificing devotion to press it on.

2. In securing proselytes the bad features and aims of the system are kept in the back-ground, while certain commendable truths and principles which Mormons hold in common with all who pretend to have any faith in God, and any belief in the immortality

These are some of the elements of the answer to the question why Mormon communities have grown so rapidly, and why they are still growing and their power is still increasing.

How, now, is all this to be met? A shame and a monstrous evil, how are we to undo it and smite it down?

1. *Through the agency of an efficient public opinion.*

There ought to be such a public opinion created in this land on this Mormon question that every polygamist and every advocate of polygamy and every apologist for polygamy should feel the heat and the smiting wrath of it on all sides.

As it is men smile or turn away indifferent when Mormonism is mentioned. They say: "We are busy with our farms, and our work-shops, and our buying and selling, and our books, and our politics; we cannot be diverted from these; let Mormonism work out its own destiny." But this will not do. The question must be agitated. The facts must be gathered and distributed. Intelligence must be enlisted. Right sentiment must be aroused. Pulpits, platforms, organizations must speak out. The chivalry which rushes to the defence of womanhood must be evoked. All the interest which gathers about a sweet Christian home, and a pure church and republican institutions must be awakened and put to service. As with the voice of one man, swollen to the tones of an irresistible and burning indignation, this nation must say to Mormon polygamists, "*Stop!*"

2. *Adequate laws adequately enforced.*

Already a beginning has been made; but it is only a beginning. The Edmunds bill, it is more than likely, will need a good deal of supplementing before it is fully up to the demands of the situation. Dealing with polygamy from this on is to be no mere May-game. Every inch of the ground will have to be contested. All the technicalities and all the limitations of the Constitution will be invoked to shelter and even to foster this iniquity. As we have seen in a sentence cited a little back from President Taylor's discourse, he holds that these laws against plural marriages are "unconstitutional." There are plenty of men—some of them in high places—to back him in that notion and cry "*Unconstitutional!*" at every effective measure which is brought forward.

The suggestion of this difficulty is humiliating. It would hardly seem possible that the Constitution of a Christian Nation, in this Nineteenth Century, by any blundering in its structure, by any interpretation of its articles, by any abuse of its spirit, could be

name of one person authorized to perform such marriages, although there were several hundred in Salt Lake City alone. This is a specimen of the sworn evidence of the "representatives of God upon earth," in an examination which lasted for several hours.

"When Angus M. Cannon was asked how the record of marriages in his church was perpetuated, he replied, he kept his own, and presumed other people did the same. He would not say that there was not any official record; it was none of his business whether there was or was not. He had never seen it, and was presumed to give evidence only about what he knew.

"The father of Clawson's first wife swore that he had never had any conversation with his daughter in regard to the matter in question, and did not know his son-in-law contemplated taking a second wife. And this in the face of a well-known fact that he had kept his daughter a prisoner for several days until she became reconciled to the second marriage! The father and brothers of young Clawson also had never heard defendant say anything on the matter, though they had all visited the young man's house at different times and seen the young woman in question there, acting as if she had a right there and was one of the family.

" . . . The entire testimony in this case goes to prove that the Mormon Church has a completely organized system, whose object is to defeat and frustrate the administration of justice. How long will the American nation permit this organized system to exist?" Surely how long!

It is understood, and I suppose there is no doubt about it, that the officials of the church distinctly teach that a false statement under oath is a trivial offense in comparison with a betrayal of the secrets of the Endowment House. Amongst the leading Mormons there is no respect for United States law, no respect for the United States flag, and they are ready to override the one as often as opportunity occurs, and to trample the other in the dust.

It is an open conflict, from this time on to be hotter and hotter. The nation must not yield in it. As often as our laws are shown to be defective they must be amended. Wherein they are shown to be misconceived and inadequate they must be displaced by better ones. Without laws with grip in them, and without men of grit behind to enforce them, we shall make very little immediate headway in counteracting the encroachments and arresting the progress of Mormonism. But adequate laws, adequately enforced, will be of immense service; and we must not cease in our demands until such laws are written on our statute books, and written to remain.

back through a period of ten or fifteen years, will discover at once how effective for good is their work. Christian schools break in on Mormon traditions and Mormon prejudices. Pupils who come under the tuition of these Christian schools for any length of time, if they do not at once and forever break away from the Mormon faith, cannot afterwards be trained into good Mormons. President Taylor and those associated with him in the leadership of the church, recognize this, by declaring Latter-day Saints "blind to the welfare of their offspring," when they "place them in the care of persons hostile to the faith which the parents hold to be divine," as they do when they commit them to these schools. The Christian school prepares the way for the Christian home. The Christian school is the herald and prophecy of the Christian church. The Christian school supplies the conditions of a Christian civilization.

Whatever other helps or influences we have or do not have in our endeavors to bring the people of these Mormon Territories into allegiance to Christian ideas and Christian standards, and whatever be the stage of this reform we seek to bring about—accomplished, or only half accomplished, or not even begun to be accomplished, the Christian school is an imperative necessity. Through the Christian school we get the leverage we need to lift the whole community into light and purity. As Christians, devoted simply to the welfare of the Divine Kingdom; as philanthropists, loving mankind; as Christian patriots, jealous of the good name of our country, and intent on its highest prosperity, we must plant Christian schools in all these Mormon communities.

These, then, are the three lines along which we are to work. These are the points on which we are to concentrate attention and effort. We are to do our best to swell the tide of public opinion against polygamy. We are to demand effective laws and able and earnest men to administer them. We are to push Christian schools to the utmost limit of our resources.

To overthrow Mormon polygamy looks like an immense undertaking. It is. Only those wholly unacquainted with the strength and determination of Mormonism will be likely to underestimate the task this evil imposes. But it is not yet sixty years since one man, and he a man of small intelligence and without any moral character to aid him, set this iniquity in motion. It would be a striking anomaly and a crying shame if the millions of thoughtful and earnest citizens of America, who have convictions on this subject, should prove to be unable to arrest this iniquity, and turn it back, defeated and crushed